

THE SENTINEL-JOURNAL

Entered April 23, 1903, at Pickens, S. C., as Second-Class Matter, Under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

VOL. XXXVIII.

PICKENS, S. C., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1908.

NO. 32.

OUR SCHOOLS

By PROF. WILLIAM H. HAND,
University of South Carolina.
Paper Number Nine.

The High School Situation.—Counting the increased facilities added this year, it is easily demonstrated by figures that the public high schools of the State, aided and unaided, have increased in efficiency more than twenty-five per cent since January 1, 1907. In more than one-fourth of them the efficiency has been doubled within that time. The chief increase is in the quantity and quality of the teaching force, thus giving longer recitation periods, a wider range of studies, and lengthened courses of study. The State appropriation of \$50,000 has been the chief instrument by which these improvements have been brought about, but it must be admitted that even with this lever it has been a task of magnitude to secure this increased efficiency. It has required courage and watchfulness on the part of the State High School Board to prevent the schools from taking the State aid for the high school, then turning it into the common school department without one particle of increase of efficiency in the high school.

The introductory statement might lead the uninformed to think that our high schools are now satisfactory. Far from it. There are not far from 140 public schools coming within the minimum definition of a high school under the present high school law—one teacher giving all his time to not over than fifteen pupils above the eighth grade or seventh school year. These 140 schools, 25 have one high school teacher each, 80 schools have two teachers each, and the remaining ones more than two teachers each. Only six schools have each the full teaching time of five teachers or more.

In nearly all the one-teacher high schools the recitation periods have been advanced to 30 minutes each, nothing less than 20 minutes being accepted in the aided schools. In those with two or more high school teachers, fully three-fourths have 40 and 45-minute periods, while a few have one hour periods. In an aided school of this class nothing less than 30 minutes is accepted. The greatest single gain has been this lengthening of the recitation periods, and upon the whole the situation in this respect is satisfactory.

Some noticeable improvement in the competency of the teachers has been made, but in this respect conditions are far from satisfactory. Many places are willing to pay from \$1,200 to \$1,500 for a supervising principal, but give him cheap assistants. It is utterly useless to talk about getting a competent and experienced woman, fitted to do high school teaching, at \$40 a month, or a man who has shown himself qualified, at \$60. It is painful to me to say this, for among just such teachers are some of my best personal friends. But I know only too well that the standard of the high schools depends upon the standard of their teaching force. Let me tell some things I have seen and heard. I have seen more than one high school teacher wrestle a half hour with an ordinary problem in Wentworth's Practical Arithmetic, a book usually completed in the eighth grade. In Tarr's Physical Geography a book really too difficult for the eighth grade where it is usually found, I have seen teachers cover enough ground in one 30-minute recitation to have given profitable work for three such periods. In one history recitation I have seen the class read the text like a fourth reader for one-half the time, then listened to the teacher ask twenty to thirty wholly unrelated questions each suggestive of the answer expected. Day after day I see teachers vainly attempting to teach English Grammar and Punctuation from the rules and the few examples given in the textbook, and seemingly oblivious to the fact that every text the child uses is full of the very illustrations needed. Latin is usually referred to as a dead language; it might with propriety be called dead in some instances. Not a few high school pupils after two years of Latin study are unable to separate a word into its syllables, or to determine the length of a syllable.

In translation it is no uncommon thing to hear such as this: "Gallia-Gaul, est-is, omnis-all, divisa-divided, in-in, partes-parts, tres-three," etc. As a specimen product of the vigor of the Latin grafted upon the flexibility of the English, note this: "The army having been drawn up more as the nature of the place and the slope of the hill and the necessity of the time than as the order and plan of military things demanded, since the different legions some in one part and some another were resisting the enemy and the thick hedges having been cast down," etc. (See Caesar's Gallic War, Book II, chapter 22.) The teacher who accepted this jargon holds a college diploma, and is exempt from examination of fitness to teach. On my desk are some specimens of spelling in the handwriting of high school teachers—all but one college graduate: Caesar (thus by three teachers), latin, literature, Enock Arden. Beauler's Grammar has been in constant use in this State eight years, and Myers' Histories more than fifteen years. Here are some of the variations: Myer's, Meyers', Meyer's; Beuhler (five teachers), Beulah (three teachers), Beulah (two teachers) Beuhlar (one teacher). A fifteen hundred dollar principal can not make bricks without straw.

Only a few high schools are content to offer a two-year course, although one of the best schools in the State has but two years. Nine-tenths of the high schools offer a three-year course, no matter how many nor how few teachers. Last year there were but four public high schools in the State with a standard four-year course and enough teachers to teach it. The report for 1908-9 will show perhaps eight standard four-years schools. To be sure more than four schools claim a four-year course. Several schools claiming a four-year course were credited with fewer units of work than are required for a standard three-year course and one school claiming four years fell below the requirements for a standard two-year course. The standard applied to the high schools was that generally accepted by the colleges of the State, and is below that used by the Carnegie Foundation Board. The error in to which most of these schools have fallen is to divide their pupils into four classes with six and seven month intervals of advancement between each two, then call each division a year in the course. That the reader may see the validity of some of these claims, some courses are here outlined: This is the fourth year's work in one school: The first half of Myers' General History, Commercial Arithmetic five times a week, three books of Plane Geometry, and forty-five hours during the year in Tappan's History of Literature. Another four-year school gets through the Second Book of Caesar's Gallic War, four books of Plane Geometry, and Tappan's Literature. Numbers of these courses show that the third year and the fourth year classes are together in more than one study. One must not be misled by the term literature in many of these schools. It is nothing more than reading about the authors of literature a little biography, if the truth must be told.

The poverty of some of these four-year courses is more than offset by some of the plethora three-year courses, some of which are formidable affairs. At random I take one year's work from one of these courses: Arithmetic, Algebra, Rhetoric, Literature, Latin (reading, grammar, and prose composition), Physical Geography, History and Business Methods (an innocent little text.) In this year's work every pupil takes everything prescribed, and each pupil is on recitation practically every period during the day. Several schools have Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry in the same year's work, and a few have Physical Geography and Physics in the same year, with practically no other science in the entire course.

The majority of the one-teacher high schools undertake the impossible—to teach a full four-year course. One such school has classes in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, English Grammar, English Composition, Literature, Physical Geography, U. S. History, S. C. History, General History, Beginner's Latin, Caesar, and Ovid. One teacher may teach a few subjects through a four-year course, and do it well, but on such course as the one just given a teacher is wasting his time and energy. The greatest evil is to the pupil. His time and effort are

divided up among so many subjects that he pursues none of them long enough or far enough to get any training or knowledge out of them. In even the better schools the average pupil gets but little out of such subjects as Physical Geography, Physics, and Civics, because they are not studied long enough to benefit the pupil.

The high schools, like the common schools, suffer from the endless changing of teachers. A comparison of this year's schedule with that of last year shows that the whole course has been overhauled and reorganized, and in some cases the new course seems to be given over to reviewing past work. Perhaps such course is necessary, but it shows a fearful waste of energy somewhere. In at least two cases the new teachers have taken the pupils out of last year's eighth and ninth grades, added a few recruits, and made a four-year school. Presumably this is progress.

Atlanta Court Fixes Weight Georgia Mule May Haul.

Atlanta, Ga., Special.—There is a limit to the weight a Georgia mule should be made to haul and this limit was fixed by Judge Broyles in police court at 2,500 pounds. Judge Broyles fined C. B. Walker \$5.75 because Walker's mule was caught by an enterprising policeman in the act of hauling a load of 4,032 pounds.

Prominent Georgia Woman Dead.

Columbus, Ga., Special.—Emma Moffett Tyng, aged 62 years, died here Monday. Mrs. Tyng was an extensive traveler in both the new and old worlds and her lecture on the Holy Grail was received with much appreciation in various Southern cities. She spent nearly all of the past few years of her life in New York. She was the author of one novel and was a frequent magazine contributor.

Frank of Hallowe'en Celebrators Causes Costly Fire in Texas Town.

Belton, Texas, Special.—Fire started by Hallowe'en roisterers Saturday night destroyed the Belton compress and 10,000 bales of cotton. The damage is \$250,000, covered by insurance. Twenty residences were damaged by fire and water, and 170 loaded freight cars burned.

Receivers For Southern Life and Accident Company.

Norfolk, Va., Special.—Upon suit filed in the United States Circuit Court here by Charles L. Hilgartner, R. E. Hilgartner and Addition E. Mullikin, citizens of Maryland, for the appointment of receivers, in Virginia, for the Southern Life and Accident Insurance Company, Judge Waddill cited the defendant company to appear here November 16th and show cause why a receiver should not be named.

Mill Employees Get Full Work.

Pawtucket, R. I., Special.—The thread mills of the J. & P. Coats Company, in this city, employing 2,500 hands, resumed a full time working schedule on Saturday, according to an announcement posted in the mills. The mills have been running on short time since the financial depression of last fall.

World's Visible Cotton Supply.

New Orleans, Special.—Secretary Hester's statement of the world's visible supply of cotton issued Saturday shows the total visible is 3,617,900 against 3,230,124 last week and 3,371,053 last year. Of this the total of American cotton is 3,092,900 against 2,741,124 last week and 2,565,082 last year all other kinds including Egypt, Brazil, India, etc., 525,000 against 539,000 last week and 806,876 last year.

A MEAN SLUR.

"The laundrymen are thinking about forming an exchange." "Good idea. I suppose you can go there and trade the collars you get for your own wash, eh?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

MR. TAFT'S RELIGION

President Roosevelt Says It is His Own Private Concern

PEOPLE SHOULD NOT INTERFERE

The President-Elect's Religious Belief, Declares the President, Is Purely His Own Private Concern; a Matter For Which He Is Responsible Solely to His Maker, and Not a Subject for General Discussion or Political Discrimination.

Washington, Special.—"Secretary Taft's religious faith is purely his own private concern and not a matter for general discussion and political discrimination," says President Roosevelt in a letter he made public in which he answers numerous correspondents. The President says he deferred the publication of the letter until now to avoid any agitation likely to influence the election. The letter follows:

November 6, 1908.
My Dear Sir: I have received your letter running in part as follows: "While it is claimed almost universally that religion should not enter into politics, yet there is no denying that it does, and the mass of the voters that are not Catholics will not support a man for any office, especially for President of the United States, who is a Roman Catholic."

"Since Taft has been nominated for President by the Republican party, it is being circulated and is constantly urged as a reason for not voting for Taft that he is an infidel (Unitarian) and wife and brother Roman Catholics. . . . If his feelings are in sympathy with the Roman Catholic Church on account of his wife and brother being Catholics, that would be objectionable to a sufficient number of voters to defeat him. On the other hand, if he is an infidel, that would be sure to mean defeat."

I am writing this letter for the sole purpose of giving Mr. Taft all opportunity to let the world know what his religious belief is."

I received many such letters as yours during the campaign, expressing dissatisfaction with Mr. Taft on religious grounds; some of them on the ground that he was a Unitarian, and others on the ground that he was suspected to be in sympathy with Catholics. I did not answer any of these letters during the campaign because I regarded it as an outrage even to agitate such a question as a man's religious convictions, with the purpose of influencing a political election. But now that the campaign is over, when there is opportunity for men calmly to consider whether such propositions as those you make in your letter would lead, I wish to invite them to consider them, and I have selected your letter to answer because you advance both the objections commonly urged against Mr. Taft, namely: that he is a Unitarian and also that he is suspected of sympathy with the Catholics.

You ask that Mr. Taft shall "let the world know what his religious belief is." This is purely his own private concern, and it is a matter between him and his Maker, a matter for his own conscience; and to require it to be made public under penalty of political discrimination is to negative the first principles of our government, which guarantee complete religious liberty, and the right to each man to act in religious affairs as his own conscience dictates. Mr. Taft never asked my advice in the matter, but if he had asked it, I should have emphatically advised him against thus stating publicly his religious belief. The demand for a statement of a candidate's religious belief can have no meaning except that there may be discrimination for or against him because of that belief. Discrimination against the holder of one faith means retaliatory discrimination against men of other faiths. The inevitable result of entering upon such a practice would be an abandonment of our real freedom of conscience and a reversion to the dreadful conditions of religious dissensions which in so many lands have proved fatal, to true liberty, to true religion and to all advanced in civilization.

To discriminate against a thoroughly upright citizen because he belongs to some particular Church, or because, like Abraham Lincoln, he has not avowed his allegiance to any Church, is an outrage against the liberty of conscience which is one of the foundations of American life. You are entitled to know whether a man seeking your suffrage is a man of clean and upright life, honorable in all his dealings with his fellows and fit by qualification and purpose to do well in the great office for which he is a candidate; but you are not entitled to know matters which lie purely between himself and his Maker. If it is proper or legitimate to oppose a man for being a Unitarian, as was John Quincy Adams for instance, as is the Reverend Edward Everett Hale, at the present moment chaplain of the Senate, and an American of whose life all good Americans are proud—then it would be equally proper to support or oppose a man because of his views on justification by faith, or the method of administering the sacrament of the gospel of salvation by works. If you once enter on such a career there is absolutely no limit at which you can legitimately stop.

So much for your objections to Mr. Taft because he is a Unitarian. Now, for your objections to him because you think his wife and brother to be Roman Catholics. As it happened they are not; but if they were, or if he were a Roman Catholic himself, it ought not to affect in the slightest degree any man's supporting him for the position of President.

I believe that this republic will endure for many centuries. If so there will doubtless be among its Presidents Protestants and Catholics and very probably at some time, Jews. I have constantly tried while President to act in relation to my fellow Americans of Catholic faith as I hope that any future President who happens to be a Catholic will act towards his fellow Americans of Protestant faith. Had I followed any other course I should have felt that I was unfit to represent the American people.

In my cabinet at the present moment there sit side by side Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Jew, each man chosen because in my belief he is peculiarly fit to exercise on behalf of all our people the duties of the office to which I have appointed him. In no case does the man's religious belief in any way influence his discharge of his duties, save as it makes him more eager to act justly and uprightly in his relations to all men. The same principles that have obtained in appointing the members of my Cabinet, the highest officials under me, the officials to whom is entrusted the work of carrying out all the important policies of my administration, are the principles upon which all good Americans should act in choosing, whether by election or appointment, the men to fill any office from the highest to the lowest in the land.

Yours truly,
THEODORE ROOSEVELT.
Mr. J. C. Martin,
Dayton, Ohio.

Seagulls of Auchmithie.

In the fishing village of Auchmithie you may frequently witness seagulls flying into the houses of the fishermen and partaking of food from their hands. One of these sea birds was in the habit of staying in a fisherman's house all the year round except at the breeding season, when it left. About a fortnight ago, while the gull was away, the fisherman removed his home some three and a half miles from the former place.

The fisherman never expected to see his old friend the gull again. It was therefore, much to his astonishment that he beheld on a recent Sunday the sea bird come walking into his new residence with stately steps to resume his old familiarities and household ways.—London Spectator.

Remarks the Baltimore News. It is felt that little headway can be made in staying the progress of tuberculosis until men and women who come into contact with those who suffer from it are brought to know the enormous extent of the plague and realize that they must assist in preventing its progress.